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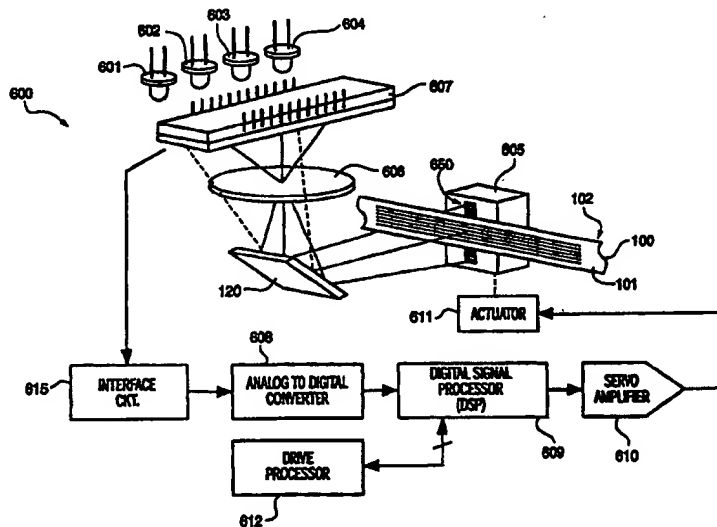
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(54) Title: OPTICAL SERVO SYSTEM FOR A TAPE DRIVE



(57) Abstract

The optical servo system for a tape drive (600) that functions to align a read/write head (605) with the data tracks written on a recording surface of a tape by reading optical servo tracks (110) that are formed on the back side (101) of the tape (100). This process decouples the magnetic recording of data on the recording surface of the tape from the optical servo system which makes use of servo tracks formed on the back side of the tape. The data storage capacity of the tape is increased since the entire recording surface of the tape is filled with data tracks and the precise alignment of the read/write head makes it possible to place the data tracks closer together. Regions of contrasting reflectivity or phase (650) are also provided on a surface of the read/write head to enable the optical servo system (607) to view an image of both the read/write head and the entire back side of the tape to thereby align the movable read/write head with the data tracks.

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OPTICAL SERVO SYSTEM FOR A TAPE DRIVE

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to servo systems for use with tape media and, in particular, to a servo system that makes use of optical tracking features formed
5 on the back side of the tape to enable the system to precisely align the read/write heads with the recorded data located on the front side of the tape.

Problem

It is a problem in the field of tape data storage media to accurately position the read/write heads with respect to the tracks of data written on the tape. In
10 longitudinal tape media, the tape typically contains a single recording surface on which is written along the length of the tape a plurality of parallel aligned tracks of data. In systems using high track densities (>200 tracks per inch), the precise alignment of these data tracks with the read/write heads of the associated tape drive is accomplished by the use of a plurality of servo tracks written on the tape
15 recording surface, interspersed with the tracks of data. The servo tracks, typically written during the tape manufacturing process, function as a physical reference for the placement of the data tracks when the data tracks are written on the tape and for reading previously written data tracks from the tape. The position information derived from the servo tracks is used by the tape drive to adjust the position of the
20 movable read/write head to enable the accurate reading and writing of data to and from the data tracks.

A problem with this tracking system is that the number of data tracks written on the tape is limited by the need for servo tracks written on the recording surface to provide position information. There is a need to facilitate the development and
25 use of future tape systems with increased data capacity. This is often accomplished by the increase in the number of data tracks and the amount of data placed in a given track. Due to the mechanical instability of tape media, higher data track densities require a decreased physical spacing between data and servo tracks to ensure the accurate alignment of the read/write heads with the data
30 tracks. The decreased spacing drives the need for increased numbers of servo tracks which, in turn, must share the tape area with data tracks. Furthermore, it is highly desirable for future systems to retain the ability to read the tapes made on earlier systems - this is termed "backward compatibility". This backward

compatibility requires the head positioning servos to be able to work on tapes with varying numbers of tracks and track configurations. This presents a design challenge and can force future drive designs to trade off between performance enhancements and backward compatibility. A further problem is that magnetically
5 written servo tracks are susceptible to track erasure. Bulk erasure of the tape can erase servo tracks, drive system failure can result in the servo tracks being overwritten and corrupted - either of which can render the tape and its data useless.

There are numerous servo track systems in use in the field of rewritable data storage media. Some of these are illustrated by the disclosures of the following
10 patents.

U.S. Patent No. 4,958,245, titled "Apparatus And Method For Optical Servo Control With Media Having Information Storage And Servo Control Regions Of Different Reflectivities" discloses an optical servo head to read position information from a disk on which data is magnetically recorded. The disk has a plurality of
15 optical servo tracks formed thereon in the form of relatively nonreflective regions comprising concentric grooves formed in the reflective surface of the magnetic disk. The servo system illuminates a plurality of the reflective and non-reflective regions and uses a quadrature photodetector array to achieve tracking.

U.S. Patent No. 5,067,039 titled "High Track Density Magnetic Media With
20 Pitted Optical Servo Tracks And Method For Stamping The Tracks On The Media" discloses a method for mechanically stamping the servo tracks on the optical disk during the disk manufacturing process.

U.S. Patent No. 5,279,775 titled "Acousto-Optic Intensity Control Of Laser Beam During Etching Of Optical Servo Information Of Magnetic Media" discloses
25 a system that etches servo tracks on a magnetic disk. Track following during the etching process is accomplished by the use of an acoustic-optical device to maintain the beam in concentric patterns, while a laser beam is used to etch the servo tracks, with the laser beam intensity being controlled by the acoustic-optical device

30 U.S. Patent No. 5,283,773 titled "Steering Laser Beam While Etching Optical Servo Tracks For Magnetic Disks" discloses a system that etches servo tracks on a magnetic disk. Track following during the etching process is accomplished by the

use of an acoustic-optical device to maintain the beam in concentric patterns, while a laser beam is used to etch the servo tracks

U.S. Patent No. 5,462,823, titled "Magnetic Recording Materials Provided With A Photosensitive Layer" discloses a magnetic recording element that
5 comprises a support layer coated with a magnetic recording layer and a photosensitive layer. Optical tracking information is formed on the photosensitive layer by the exposure of the photoreactive surface using a servo track mask.

The above noted servo systems all make use of servo tracks that are formed on the rewritable media on the same surface as is used to store the data. The
10 servo information is typically in the form of servo tracks that are formed coextensive with the data tracks and interspersed among the data tracks. Therefore, the servo tracks occupy space on the tape that can be used for the storage of data. Furthermore, there is an inherent interaction between the use of servo tracks and the writing of data tracks such that the system cannot optimize the data recording
15 function without impacting on the servo function. Conversely, the system can not optimize the servo function without impacting the data recording function.

Solution

The above described problems are solved and a technical advance achieved by the present optical servo system for a tape drive that functions to align a
20 read/write head with the data tracks written on a recording surface of a tape by reading optical servo tracks that are formed on the back side of the tape. This process decouples the magnetic recording of data on the recording surface of the tape from the optical servo system which makes use of servo tracks formed on the back side of the tape to position the read/write head. For example, the recording
25 formats of the data can be altered and the number of data tracks can be changed without impacting the optical servo system. The servo system can accommodate a wide range of recording format changes within its signal processing algorithms without modifying its servo tracks. In addition, the data storage capacity of the tape is increased since the entire recording surface of the tape is filled with data tracks
30 and precise alignment of the read/write head with the data tracks makes it possible to place the data tracks closer together.

Th tape used in this system has magnetic data tracks recorded on the front side of the tape and optical servo tracks, comprising regions of differing reflectivity or phase, formed on the back side of the tape. Although current magnetic media types could be utilized, the servo track reading and writing processes explained below are optimized by the use of a media with a second side optically tuned to have high contrast or phase change at the read lumination wavelength and high write sensitivity at the servo track writing wavelength. A magnetic read/write head that is positioned juxtaposed to the front side of the tape reads data from and writes data to the data tracks while the optical servo system reads servo data from the servo tracks that are formed on the back side of the tape. The requirement for close data track-to-servo track spacing is met by having the servo tracks located immediately behind the data tracks. Regions of contrasting reflectivity or phase are also provided on a surface of the read/write head to enable the optical servo system to view an image of both the read/write head and the entire back side of the tape to thereby align the movable read/write head with the data tracks. The head's optical features may be formed by numerous means known to those familiar with the art including integration into the head structure itself or affixing a secondary structure to a head surface. An optical sensor array generates electrical signals indicative of the received image which are then used by a digital signal processor to determine the required alignment of the read/write head with the data tracks. Once the proper alignment is determined, the digital signal processor generates a position error signal that in turn is fed to the servo amplifier which drives an actuator to align the movable read/write head with the data tracks.

The use of the two sources of optical data from the read/write head and the tape media improves the accuracy, performance and reliability of the data track to read/write head alignment while simplifying the entire servo system. Using this approach, all optical components can be fixed in place. Since the servo system "closes the loop" around the tape and head optical feature alignment, system alignment and calibration requirements are eased. Fault tolerance to damaged tape and/or head optical features is facilitated by the availability of redundant optical information - a plurality of optical features exist on both the tape and the head. Furthermore, because this system locates the entire width of the tape with

respect to the head, servo information is always available to quickly re-establish head-to-tape alignment (i.e. "track following") should it be lost during drive operations. Interchange, the ability to read a given tape on a population of tape drives, is facilitated by the servo system's ability to image the mechanical
5 relationship between tape and head immediately after the tape is loaded into the drive and make appropriate offset adjustments in the head's static position. The immediate availability of this offset information results in a reduced tape load time. This reduction, in turn, results in higher overall job throughput for the drive in a repetitive tape loading environment - such as is commonly seen when robots are
10 used to mount and dismount tapes in the drive.

The optical servo tracks are not subject to magnetic erasure. Accidental magnetic damage is eliminated thus increasing data recovery reliability. Bulk magnetic erasure of the tapes facilitates their reuse by reducing old data noise sources, improving data security by eliminating old data and providing an economic
15 benefit over new tapes.

Brief Description Of The Drawings

Figure 1 illustrates in block diagram form the present optical servo system for a tape drive;

Figure 2 illustrates the waveform signal output from the image system of the
20 present optical servo system for a tape drive;

Figure 3 illustrates in block diagram form the system for forming the servo tracks on the tape for use by the present optical servo system for a tape drive; and

Figure 4 illustrates in flow diagram form the operation of the present optical servo system for a tape drive.

Detailed Description

The present optical servo system for a tape drive operates with a tape that has data tracks written on a recording surface (first side) of the tape and optical servo tracks formed on the back side (second side) of the tape. An optical servo system reads the servo tracks on the second side of the tape and optical features
30 on the read/write head to determine the alignment between a read/write head with data tracks on the first side of the magnetic tape. The digital signal processor generates control signals indicative of the adjustments needed to align the

read/write head with the data tracks, the head actuator responds to the amplified signals and moves the read/write head to the desired position.

Optical Servo System For A Tape Drive

Figure 1 illustrates in block diagram form the present optical servo system for a tape drive 600 and Figure 4 illustrates in flow diagram form the operation of this system. The present optical servo system for a tape drive 600 operates to align tape 100 and read/write head 605 of the tape drive as tape 100 passes over read/write head 605. The remaining mechanical elements of the tape drive are not illustrated herein for the purpose of simplicity of description. The read/write head 605 is movable and its position is determined by actuator 611, which operates under control of the present optical servo system for a tape drive 600 as directed by the drive processor 612. The tape 100, for the purpose of this description, is a magnetic tape that has a recording surface on a first side 102 and a second side 101 that is used for positioning information. This process begins with the drive processor 612 issuing a track position request at step 901.

The tape 100 has formed on the second side 101 thereof a plurality of parallel aligned servo tracks 110 that are used to precisely identify the position of the data tracks written on the first side 102 of the tape 100. The optical servo system for a tape drive 600 reads one or more of the servo tracks 110 at the point that tape 100 is directly over read/write head's optical features 650. This is accomplished by the Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) 601-604 each generating a beam of light that is directed onto tape 100 and read/write head 605 by mirror 120. The servo tracks 110 formed on the second side 101 of tape 100 represent areas of differing reflectivity or phase and the image of the second side 101 of tape 100 and the optical features 650 on the face of the read/write head 605 extending beyond tape 100 is reflected back onto mirror 120. This reflected image is directed by mirror 120 through lens 606 onto sensor array 607. Sensor array 607 is an imaging device, such as a linear Charge Coupled Device (CCD) imaging array, that functions to capture the reflected image and convert the reflected image into an electrical signals at step 902. The generated electrical signal, indicative of the image content, is transmitted to interface circuit 615, which produces an analog signal that is transmitted to an analog to digital converter 608 to create a digital

representation of the image at step 903. A digital signal processor 609 receives this digital representation of the image and algorithmically determines the alignment of the read/write head 605 with the data tracks from the digital image at step 904. The digital signal processor 609 compares this current head position alignment with
5 the drive processor's requested position from step 901 and then determines the direction and the distance that the read/write head 605 must be moved to meet the new position request. The digital signal processor 609 at step 906 generates a position error control signal that defines this movement and transmits the signal to a servo amplifier 610 at step 907 to control the operation of actuator 611 to move
10 the read/write head 605 in the direction needed to align the movable read/write head 605 with the data tracks at step 908.

While the read/write head 605 approaches the desired track position, the sensor array 607 continues to periodically update the tape-head image. This image signal is sent through processing blocks 615, 608 to the digital signal processor
15 609. The digital signal processor 609 makes a new determination of read/write head alignment then reduces its position error signal to the servo amplifier 610 accordingly to slow the actuator's movement of the head. This sampling process (steps 902-908) repeats itself until the head is in the desired position. At this point, the system "track follows" by continuing to detect small misalignments between the
20 head and the desired track and signaling the actuator 611 to make corrections to the head's position to keep it precisely aligned (while still continuing to repeat steps 902-908). This process continues until a new request (step 901) is received from drive processor 612 to move to a new track position. The drive processor's new position request is compared by the digital signal processor 609 (at step 904) to the
25 current read/write head position and a new position error signal is generated (at step 906) and sent to the servo amplifier 610 (step 907). The actuator 611 begins to move the read/write head 605 (step 908) while the sensor array 607 allows the servo system to monitor progress toward achieving the new head position by periodically updating the tape-head image. The image is sent through processing
30 blocks 615, 608 to the digital signal processor 609, where the position error signal is updated - this process repeats until the new head position is attained and track following begins (steps 902-908).

As is known in the art, for fastest performance, the actuator's acceleration is dependent upon the distance it is required to travel - large repositioning creates the largest acceleration/deceleration. Small track following re-positioning results in the smallest acceleration/decelerations and the greatest positional precision. In addition, the configuration disclosed herein is illustrative of the inventive concept and other optical configurations are well within the design capabilities of one skilled in the art.

Image Content

An example of the image 700 captured by the present optical servo system for a tape drive 600 is illustrated in FIG. 2. Image 700 represents a sample of all of the pixels that are generated by sensor array 607. For the purpose of illustration, the image size is selected to be 5,000 pixels, with the horizontal axis of the diagram of Figure 2 representing the individual pixels, and the vertical axis representing the signal magnitude of the selected pixel. The diagram also includes notations along the top of the pixel chart to indicate the typical extent of the tape 100 in the image 700. In addition, the image 700 is divided into five regions: read/write head image 701, boundary between read/write head and tape image 702, tape image 703, boundary between read/write head and tape image 704, read/write head image 705. These various regions are individually discussed below.

Areas 701 and 705 are region of the read/write head image and comprise approximately the first and last 500 pixels of image 700. The variations in signal strength illustrated by the continuous curve of Figure 2 represents the presence of the contrasting markings 650 located on the surface of read/write head 605. Since the read/write head 605 is the sole source of this portion of the image, the variations are regular and map to the contrasting markings 650. Areas 702 and 704 represent the boundary between read/write head and tape image. An expanded view of area 702 illustrates the image received from the edge of tape 100. Within area 702, from about pixel 500 to about pixel 700, the contrasting regions are from the contrasting markings 650 located on the surface of read/write head 605 near the edge of tape 100. Region 712, from about pixel 700 to approximately pixel 900, indicates the edge region of tape 100 that does not

contain optical data. Area 713 from approximately pixel 900 to approximately pixel 1200 has intermittent regions of high and low reflectivity or phase. In this example, the regions of low reflectivity indicate individual tracks of the servo track group 110. Finally, area 703 includes pixels from approximately pixel 1200 through
5 approximately pixel 3800 and is an image of contrasting reflectivities or phases representing the servo tracks 110 formed on the second side 101 of tape 100.

Method of Aligning

Applying conventional pattern recognition methods to image data from step 903, the digital signal processor 609 calculates the position error signal 906 by first
10 establishing accurate measurements of the relative positions, in pixels, of the optical features found on the magnetic head and tape. Because of the tracking accuracy required by the tape drive may be more stringent than the pixel-to-pixel resolution in the image data, sub-pixel measurement accuracy is needed. This accuracy is achieved by averaging the contributions to a given position
15 measurement from as many features in the image data as possible. The digital signal processor 609 must utilize all of the image data for the magnetic head optical features, 701 and 705, to yield an accurate measurement of the magnetic head position. Similarly, many optical tracks 703 must be read and the data averaged to obtain an accurate measurement of a given magnetic track on tape. One
20 method of utilizing all the data in an image subset is to use the correlation algorithm where an image subset is compared to a reference signal stored in memory. The resulting correlation coefficient indicates a best fit when the reference signal is optimally aligned with the image subset. The reference signals can be based on typical signals experienced by many such tape drives and stored in non-volatile
25 memory or can be based on actual signals obtained by a given tape drive during initial machine calibration or periodic re-calibrations between tape loads.

Once the optical features are adequately determined, the magnetic head position is calculated by interpolation from those features, 701 and 705. The magnetic track position is computed from the position of a plurality of the closest
30 optical servo tracks from the set 703. The position error signal sent to the servo amplifier 610 at step 907 is the difference between the calculated magnetic head position and the desired magnetic track position.

Additional Features

The optical servo system for a tape drive 600 can provide additional capabilities beyond the provision of read/write head positioning information. Auxiliary information formed on the second side 101 of tape 100 can include encryption/authentication data, tape identification data or even maintenance information and read only data. For example, reflectivity or phase parameters can be recorded on tape 100 to indicate the initial state of tape 100 as well as manufacturing data. The optical servo system for a tape drive 600 can then measure the present optical characteristics of tape 100 to thereby obtain a measure of the wear on tape 100. Furthermore, optical servo system for a tape drive 600 can view the image or read/write head 605 in its entirety between loads of tape 100 to verify head integrity and identify any optical feature defects.

The servo tracks 110 can perform a simple read/write head positioning function or can be coded to provide data relating to longitudinal positioning of tape 100 to enable high speed searching of tape 100, which data can also be used for tape velocity determination. This auxiliary information is encoded into the servo tracks during the servo track writing process using modulation that can be separated out from the basic servo signals by the digital signal processor 609. The auxiliary information is then supplied to other drive or system processes in step 909.

Servo Track Write System

A system for writing optical servo tracks 400 on tape 100 is illustrated in Figure 3. The system for writing optical servo tracks 400 writes the set of optical servo tracks 110 in one pass of tape 100 through the system for writing optical servo tracks 400. The system for writing optical servo tracks 400 includes a laser 415 that focuses a beam of light into beam expander 412. The expanded beam output by beam expander 412 is extended through hologram 411 which splits the beam into a plurality of individual beams 404-409, which are focused onto tape 100 by lens 410. The exact number of beams is a design choice. However, the accuracy of the alignment of the read/write head 605 and the second side 101 of tape 100 improves as the number of optical servo tracks 110 increases. Therefore, it is desirable to place as many servo tracks 301-306 on tape 100 as possible.

Increasing the number of servo tracks to be simultaneously written on the media is facilitated by the use of media whose second side 101 is optically tuned to laser 415's wavelength. The plurality of beams 404-409 forms parallel aligned, optical servo tracks 301-306 onto the second side 101 of tape 100 as tape 100 is passed
5 under the beams 404-409. Rollers 401-403 move tape 100 under the focused beams 404-409 at a constant speed on the second side 101 of tape 100 to ensure that the optical servo tracks 110 have the same consistency.

The laser beams 404-409 can be used to write auxiliary data on the servo tracks 110 by programming laser 415 to intermittently extinguish. The intermittent
10 extinguishing (modulation) of the beam causes the servo optical tracks 110 to be written intermittently in a specified pattern on side 101 of tape 100. This auxiliary data can be used by the present invention to determine tape speed, alignment, defect detection and other attributes of the tape being read, as noted above. In the alternative, a plurality of lasers can be used to write the optical servo tracks. The
15 lasers could also be of different intensities to change the reflectivity or phase of individual tracks or the beams from the lasers can be of varying widths to change the width of the formed servo tracks to allow recognition of different sections of tape.

What is claimed is:

1. In a tape drive, a system for aligning a read/write head with a selected set of a plurality of data tracks written on a first side of a tape as said tape passes over said read/write head, wherein said tape also includes optical servo features formed on a second side of said tape, said system comprising:
 - 5 means for reading said optical servo features from said second side of said tape; and
 - means, responsive to said read optical servo features, for aligning said read/write head with said selected set of a plurality of data tracks on said first side of said tape.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein said read/write head has a plurality of optical features formed thereon or affixed thereto, further comprising:
 - means for reading said optical features from said read/write head; and
 - wherein said means for aligning is responsive to said read optical servo
 - 5 features from said second side of said tape and said read optical features from said read/write head.
3. The system of claim 2 wherein said means for reading said optical servo features and said means for reading said optical features comprise:
 - means for illuminating said optical servo features on said second side of said tape and said optical features of said read/write head;
 - 5 means for reading an image of said optical servo features on said second side of said tape and said optical features of said read/write head;
 - means for generating electrical signals indicative of said optical servo features on said second side of said tape and said optical features on said read/write head from said read image.
4. The system of claim 3 wherein said means for reading said optical servo features and said means for reading said optical features further comprise:

- means for focusing said optical servo features on said second side of said tape and said optical features on said read/write head on to an imaging device to
- 5 obtain electrical signals indicative of said image.

5. The system of claim 3, wherein said means for aligning comprises:
means, responsive to data track position data received from a controller of said tape drive, for identifying a position of said selected set of said plurality of data tracks in said plurality of data tracks;
- 5 means, responsive to said generated electrical signals, for determining a position offset between said read/write head and said selected set of said plurality of data tracks.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein said means for aligning further comprises:
means, responsive to said means for determining, for generating a position error signal to indicate a direction and magnitude of said position offset.

7. The system of claim 6 wherein said means for aligning further comprises:
means, responsive to said position error signal, for moving said read/write head to adjust said alignment of said selected set of said plurality of data tracks of said tape and said read/write head.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein said second side of said tape has formed thereon auxiliary information from the class of tape auxiliary information including but not limited to: encryption/authentication data, tape identification data, maintenance information, read only data, said system further comprising:
- 5 means for reading said auxiliary information from said second side of said tape; and
means for transmitting said read auxiliary data to a controller of said tape drive.

9. In a tape drive, a method for aligning a read/write head with a selected set of a plurality of data tracks written on a first side of a tape as said tape passes over said read/write head, wherein said tape also includes optical servo features formed on a second side of said tape, said system comprising the steps
5 of:

reading said optical servo features from said second side of said tape;
aligning, in response to said read optical servo features, said read/write head with said selected set of a plurality of data tracks on said first side of said tape.

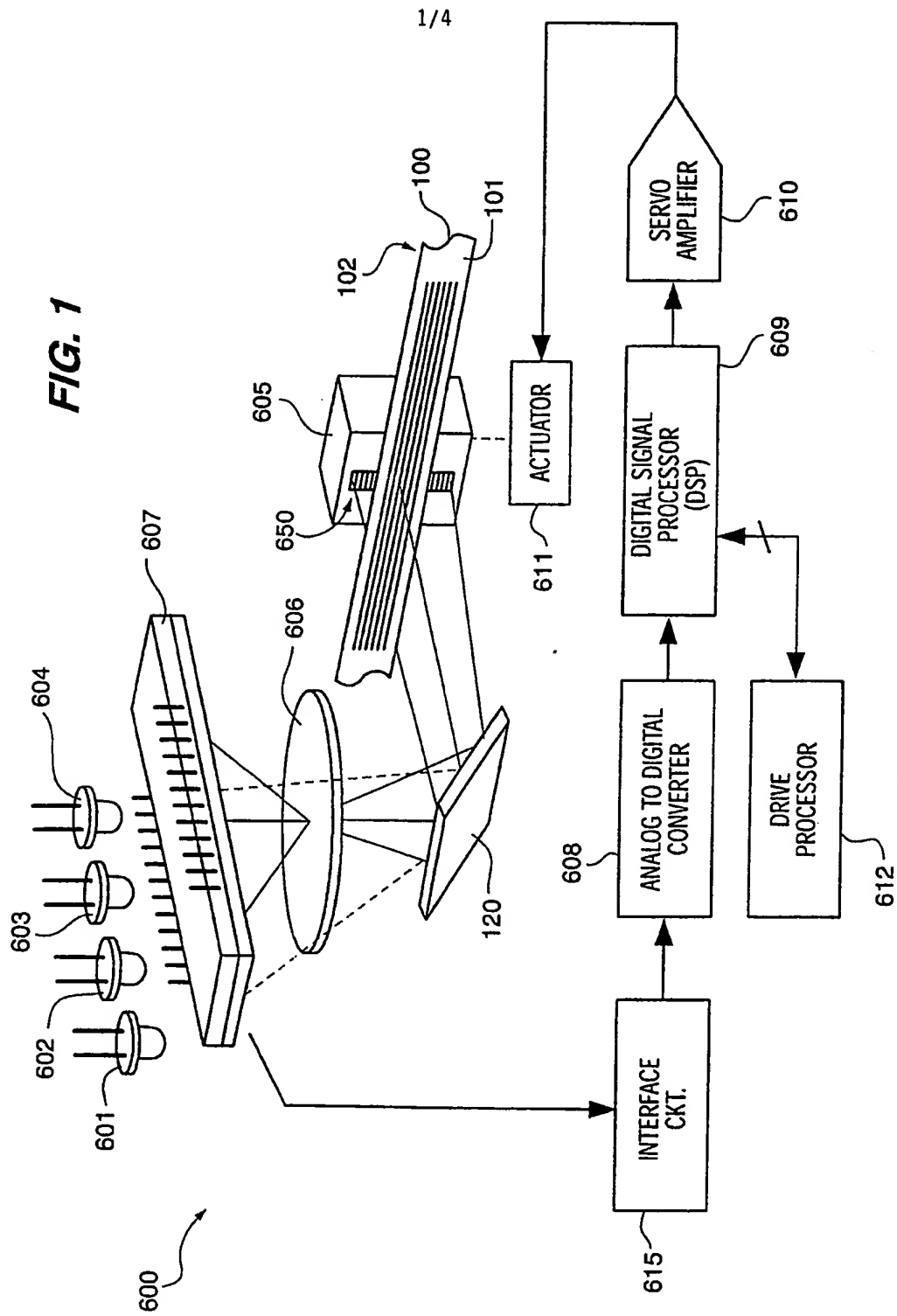
10. The method of claim 9, wherein said read/write head has a plurality of optical features formed thereon or affixed thereto, further comprising the step of:
reading said optical features from said read/write head; and
wherein said step of aligning is responsive to said read optical servo features
5 from said second side of said tape and said read optical features from said read/write head.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said step of reading said optical servo features and said step of reading said optical features comprise:
illuminating said optical servo features on said second side of said tape and said optical features of said read/write head;
5 reading an image of said optical servo features on said second side of said tape and said optical features of said read/write head; and
generating electrical signals indicative of said optical servo features on said second side of said tape and said optical features on said read/write head from said read image.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said step of reading said optical servo features and said step of reading said optical features further comprise:
focusing said optical servo features on said second side of said tape and said optical features on said read/write head on to an imaging device to obtain
5 electrical signals indicative of said image.

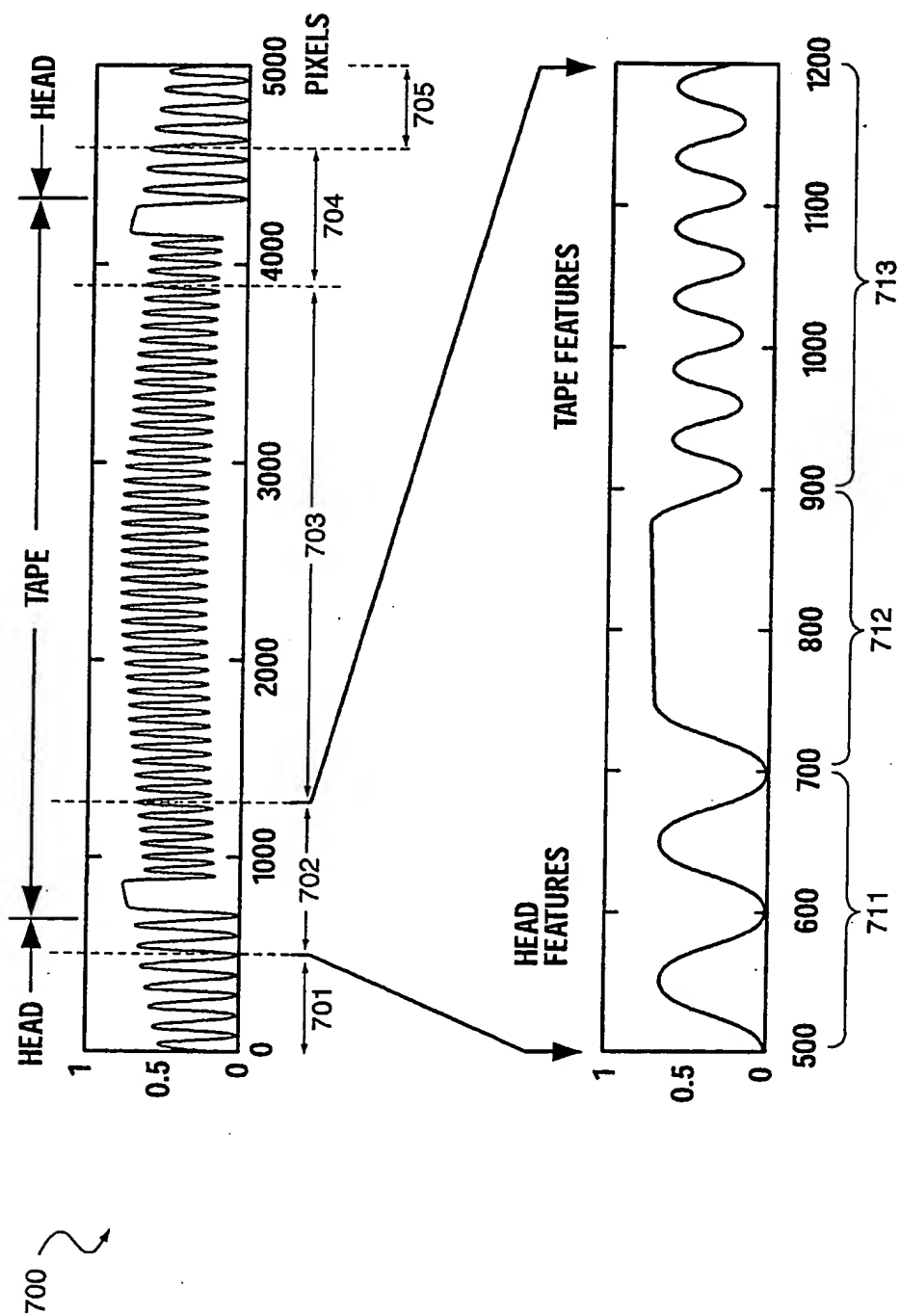
13. The method of claim 11, wherein said step of aligning comprises:
identifying, in response to data track position data received from a controller of said tape drive, a position of said selected set of said plurality of data tracks in said plurality of data tracks; and
- 5 determining, in response to said generated electrical signals, a position offset between said read/write head and said selected set of said plurality of data tracks.
14. The method of claim 13, wherein said step of aligning further comprises:
generating, in response to said step of determining, a position error signal to indicate a direction and magnitude of said position offset.
15. The method of claim 14 wherein said step of aligning further comprises:
moving, in response to said position error signal, said read/write head to adjust said alignment of said selected set of said plurality of data tracks of said tape and said read/write head.
16. The method of claim 9, wherein said second side of said tape has formed thereon auxiliary information from the class of tape auxiliary information including but not limited to: encryption/authentication data, tape identification data, maintenance information, read only data, said method further comprising the steps
- 5 of:
reading said auxiliary information from said second side of said tape;
transmitting said read auxiliary data to a controller of said tape drive.

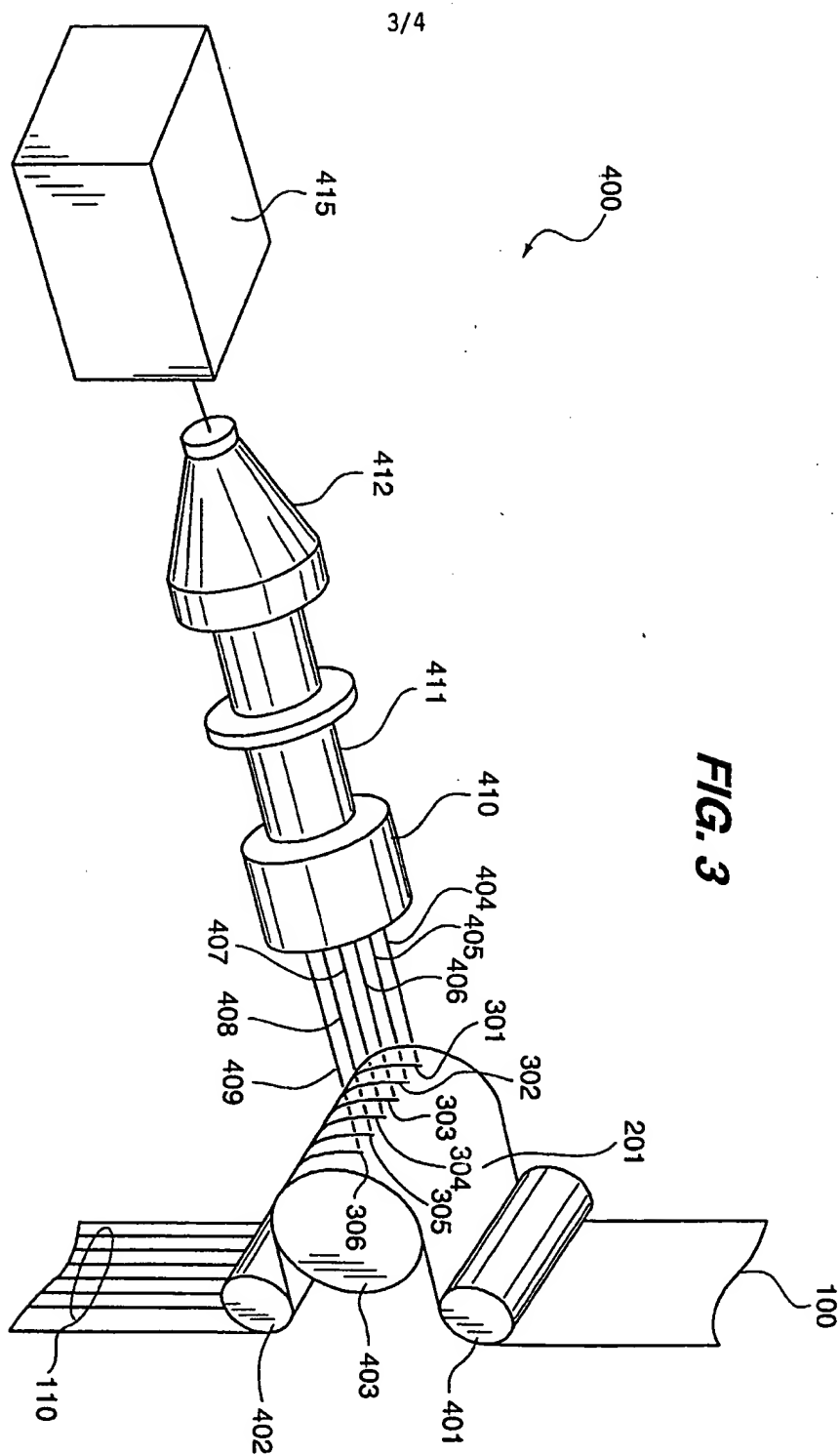
FIG. 1



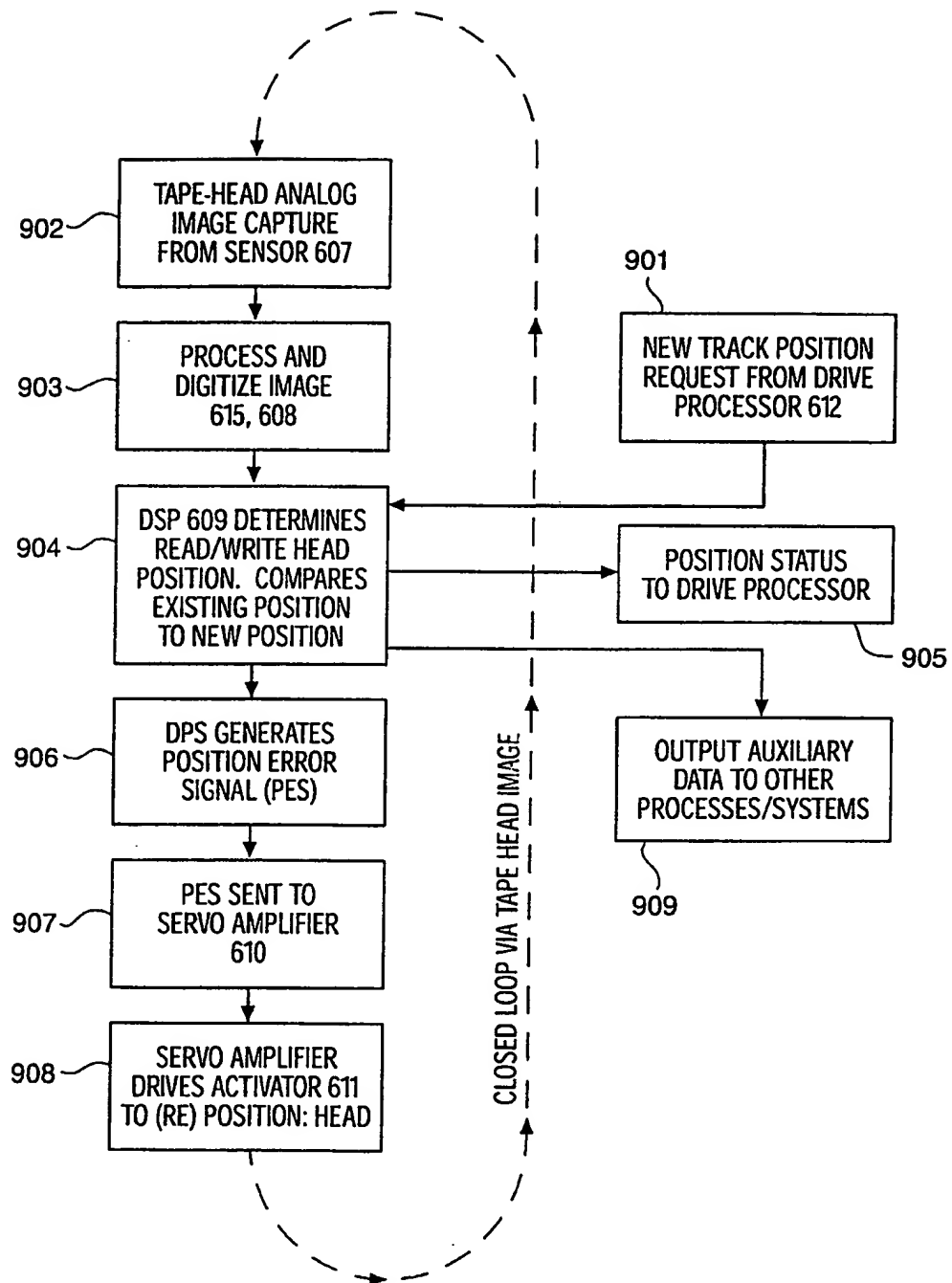
2/4

FIG. 2





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**FIG. 4**

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Intern. Appl. No.
PCT/US 98/25384

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 6 G11B21/08 G11B21/10 G11B27/26 G11B15/08 G11B5/55
G11B5/584

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 G11B

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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A	see column 12, line 41 - line 55; figures 3,5,7	5-7
A	US 4 340 305 A (SMITH HENRY I ET AL) 20 July 1982 see column 9, line 5 - line 27 see column 11, line 5 - line 11 see column 11, line 22 - column 12, line 19; claim 3; figures 7,8,17,18	1-7
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☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

23 March 1999

Date of mailing of the international search report

09/04/1999

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Fux, J

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Intern. Application No

PCT/US 98/25384

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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Information on patent family members

International Application No

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